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Society of Friends. Dress and  
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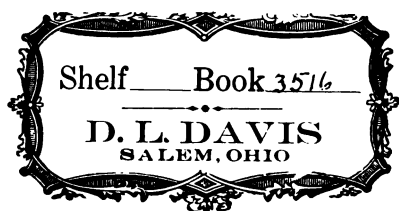
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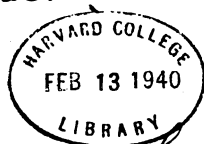
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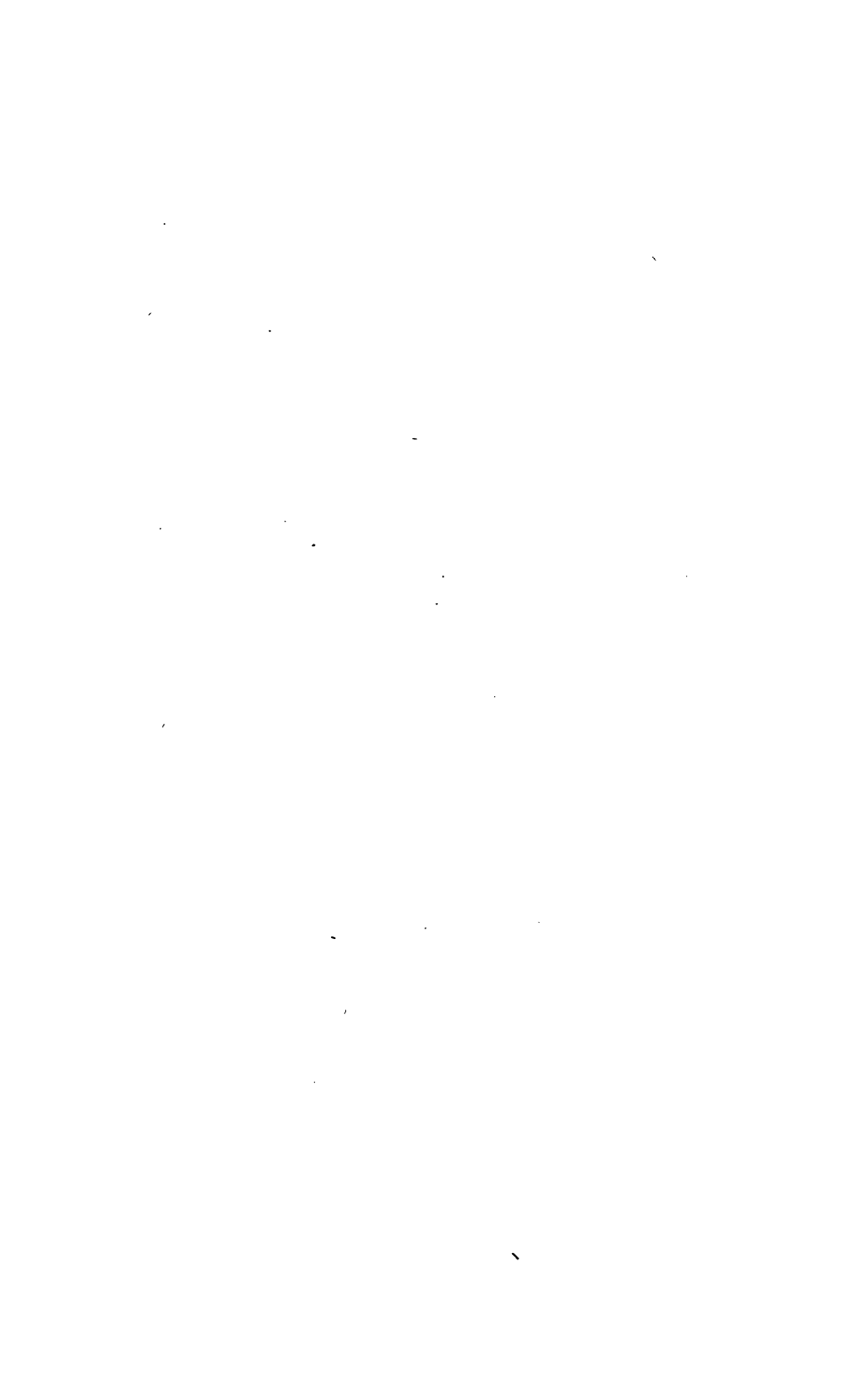
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THE succeeding pages upon the subject of Dress and Worldly Compliance, have been compiled under an apprehension that the present may be a suitable time for reviving in the minds of all who bear the name of Friends, this important testimony, which the Society from its rise until the present time has been called upon to maintain before the world, and which without doubt, will continue to be a testimony to be borne while the Society shall have existence as a distinct branch of the Church universal.





## DRESS.

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THE following selections, from the writings of Joseph Pike, are taken from the second volume of Friends' Library. Although the period at which they were written was near the beginning of the last century, and early in the history of the Society, it would appear that some of the members had then in measure fallen into a state of ease and a luxurious mode of living, accompanied by a degree of conformity to the world, with respect to attire and the furnishing of their houses. The remarks and observations seem well calculated to engage the attention of the serious and thoughtful of that period, and they are also deemed singularly appropriate to the present occasion.

The selections are reluctantly curtailed, to confine them to the subject more particularly under consideration; but the reader is affectionately invited to peruse the whole of these writings, being weighty and instructive, and very interesting as a clear and liberal exposition of the Christian testimonies, and the beautiful order and gospel harmonies of the organization of the religious Society of Friends.

\* \* \* \* \*

And if any should think, that we placed religion

barely in outward conformity and plainness, such are greatly mistaken ; so far from it. that if we should outwardly conform in every thing, in which the Holy Scriptures direct us unto, or that godly elders are moved of the Lord to advise ; yet, if our hearts are not right in His sight, and we do not witness a growth in His holy Truth, all the external conformity and plainness in the world, though good in itself, will avail us nothing as to Divine acceptance ; no more than as the apostle tells the believers, that if he gave his body to be burned, or his goods to the poor, &c., yet, if he wanted charity, (which is the love of God,) all would profit him nothing, and he would be as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. 1 Cor. 13.

However, notwithstanding religion does not consist in bodily conformity, or plainness of apparel, but is in and from the heart, as also on the other hand, pride is in the heart, and not in the outward clothing, yet true religion leads into simplicity in all outward things. For though there is a form of godliness without the power, yet the power of Truth leads into a godly form and order in outward things ; and this is abundantly proved from the Holy Scriptures, and among the rest, even in outward clothing. Thus, did true religion in the heart lead our first elders and fathers in the church, out of the fashions, customs, finery, and superfluity of apparel, and furniture, and to testify against it, as not proceeding from the Spirit of Truth, but from the vain, unsettled spirit of this world, as it most certainly does. But some cavillers have thus argued, "Where is the standard of plainness and simplicity in apparel, furniture, &c., by which we are to square ourselves, or who are

the proper judges to whom we should submit ourselves? How many buttons are we to wear, more or less, on our coats; what exact fashion in length and breadth are the parts of our clothes to be of; how high are our hats to be, or how broad the brims? And do not you, who press upon us this great plainness, differ among yourselves in your practice? And are not some things you wear, when strictly examined, not needful? After all, we are each best judges for ourselves; we will see for ourselves, and do as we list, and not be imposed upon by your injunctions." These were the arguments used, to my certain knowledge, by the old separatists, who in these and various other respects, strongly pleaded for what they called their Christian liberty; but at last they dwindled away, and came to nothing. And some from the very same spirit use the same language now.

As to the standard and judge they demand, I answer, the Spirit of Truth is sufficient to guide in these and all other things. Thus the apostles from the Spirit of Truth advised the believers not to be conformed to this world, not to fashion themselves according to their former lusts, not to adorn themselves with outward adorning, costly array, &c. And thus the same Spirit led our first elders and worthies to keep to plainness, and to testify against running into and following after the customs, fashions, and finery of this world. As to that frivolous objection, that plain Friends do not all go exactly alike in these respects, they never desired nor pressed a precise conformity in every trivial thing, provided there was a care and tenderness preserved to keep from edging towards, or copying vain and foolish fash-

ions; and if the objectors differed only from plainness, so far as plain Friends differ from each other, and kept within the bounds of true moderation, no fault would be found with them. With regard to the question, Who shall judge or decide such things? Certainly not those who gratify a high, vain spirit, in using such things as grieve faithful Friends, and who have themselves known but little of the work of Truth upon their hearts. The most proper outward judges in these things are rather such as are spiritual men, whose eyes are single to the Lord, and whose bodies, as saith Christ, are full of light; these, as the apostle writes, judge all things, but themselves are judged of no man, that is, of no carnal man. Such are good examples to the flock of God, and having nothing in view but his honor and the good of souls, may be safely followed, and we are bound to submit ourselves to them. As to these objectors not seeing evil in these things, or being convinced of this or that, it may be said of them, "They seeing, see not, neither do they understand;" and it will be long ere they, while they continue in this state and spirit, can rightly see the things that belong to their peace and safety and growth; and it is preposterous in them to pretend matter of conscience to wear and use gay clothing, &c.

\* \* \* \* \*

These things and much more, relating to conversation and behaviour, and using the things of the world, the apostles, in their several epistles, gave forth by the movings of the Holy Spirit to the churches. And we find, they mentioned superfluous things, that were worn and used in their days, which will comprehend those

things that are now recommended by the churches of Christ or godly elders in our day. The apostle Paul charges, to abstain from all appearance of evil; whether they eat or drank or whatsoever they did, to do all to the glory of God; not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of their mind; as obedient children, not fashioning themselves according to their former lusts in their ignorance; not to give any offence to the Jews or Gentiles, neither to the church of God; to submit themselves one to another, in the fear of God; likewise the younger to submit themselves to the elder; yea, all to be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility. Thus they were to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. It is very plain, that these texts include all things, that were in any respect likely to prove hurtful. As we are commanded to abstain from all appearance of evil, we should also abstain from every appearance of pride, which manifests itself in fine, fashionable furniture, houses, and dresses of all kinds, which most certainly lead thereto. And as we are commanded, whatsoever we do, to do all to the glory of God, we are not to be conformed to the world in adorning our bodies, but instead thereof, we should be clothed with humility, letting our moderation be known to all men; giving no offence to the church of God. In a word, such texts plainly show, that all those who are true members of the church of Christ, ought not to wear or use any of those things which grieve or offend the church; and as the younger were to be subject to the elder, and they to one another, so it utterly excludes

all such from abounding in their own strong will, contrary to the advice and counsel of the church.

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When some have been spoken to for wearing costly apparel with fashionable dresses, contrary to the plainness of Truth ; they have answered that they do not see, nor are they convinced of any hurt or evil in them, but when they do, they will put them away ; and some have added, that no one can charge them with any evil or immoral practices in their conversation ; that religion does not consist in these trivial things ; that Friends ought not to make so much ado about them. I refer such to that excellent Treatise of Robert Barclay's upon Church Government, called "The Anarchy of the Ranters," &c., in which he cites this very plea, calls it the "wisdom of man, and deceitfulness of the serpent," which would reason Truth from themselves, saying, "I must stay until I be convinced of this, that, and the other thing. I see not yet this thing to be wrong, or the other thing to be my duty." How did our elders knock down this manner of reasoning, by the Spirit of God. I desire all such to consider in the light of Truth, what is the cause, that they want sight and conviction in so very plain a case. It was the Holy Spirit of Christ that led our ancient Friends, in their first steps, to take up the cross and deny themselves of the vain fashions, customs, manners, speech, apparel, and needless ceremonies of the world ; and by these outward marks, as well as by other things, they were distinguished from other professors. While we have such a cloud of witnesses, is it not wonderful, that at this time of the day, they should pretend want of light and conviction ;



yet supposing they do not really see, let them consider, whether it is not because of their unwillingness to give pure obedience to the cross of Christ, by which they would see, that the want of clearness in things of plain duty, may proceed from want of faithfulness to what we do know, or might know ; as Christ says, "He that hath been faithful in a few things, shall be made ruler over many things." As to pleading morality, &c., this, I confess, is so far well, but that alone will not do ; because a man cannot be a right Christian, without being a good moralist ; but yet a man may be a moralist, without being an acceptable Christian in the sight of the Lord. I suppose none, who plead for and wear such fine and fashionable things as grieve faithful Friends, will pretend to say, that they are more spiritual, or see further into the things of God, than the apostles did, or our first elders have done ; neither, that the Holy Scriptures do justify them in the practice of such things. If this be granted, which I think cannot be denied, it follows, that as the apostles and our elders were more spiritual, and from the movings of the Holy Spirit advised to plainness, they, together with those who in sincerity follow their example, are in the right, and those on the opposite side are in the wrong.

And as to the objection of things being small and trivial, and that religion does not consist in plainness, I have already allowed, that religion does not consist therein ; but yet, as proceeding from a sincere mind, obedience in them is one of the effects of pure religion, or the Holy Spirit would not have led the apostles in their day, and the elders in our day, so repeatedly to press plainness, &c. And indeed the wisdom of God



is great, as seen by those who walk in the light, in leading our first elders into plainness, and out of the fashions and ceremonies of the world.

\* \* \* \* \*

Much of the stubbornness and stiffness in children who are grown up, is owing to fond and indulgent parents, some of whom desire well for their children, and as Eli did, advise and counsel them, but still they have not restrained them according to their power; and this was his sin, and the cause of the destruction of his sons. These suffer them, through their foolish and evil fondness, to get head, and to grow up in disobedience, and when dealt with by concerned Friends, they will tell them, "We must not be too harsh and severe upon our children; we must bear with them, and draw them by love, lest we drive them out from amongst Friends: we hope they will grow wiser and better in time." These and the like fond arguments, we have met with: but by means of this forbearance, such a strong spirit of rebellion has grown up in them, that at last they have become so unruly and stubborn, as to be above advice, rule, or government.

And here I would warn all such indulgent parents to repent thereof; otherwise, I verily believe the blood of their children will be required at their hands. I have compared a child to a young twig that is easily bent, but when grown to a sturdy tree is past bending. Children when young being prone by nature to evil, are to be kept in subjection; and as soon as anything of pride, wantonness, or other evil appears in them, that is the time for bending and restraining them, so far as it is in the power of parents to do, and which

is most certainly their duty, as may be plainly proved from Scripture.

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After speaking on the subject of the service of visiting families and particular persons, by those having a true and divine sense upon their spirits, Joseph Pike continues :

Therefore I think it is very plain, that private visits strengthen and confirm public testimonies, and church discipline also. I grant that public offences, in their proper season, should be brought before the church, in order that such offenders should be dealt with, by appointing some of their members to visit them, although they may have been helped by private advice and counsel, given them by these visitors ; yet several going together by the authority of the church, carry more weight, and sometimes this proves more effectual.

I believe no person of right understanding, can make it a matter of conscience to wear fine apparel, or to have fine furniture in their houses, instead of plain :—not that I am, or ever was against decency, or that the rich and poor should have all conveniences of life precisely alike, for that which may be suitable for the rich, may not be so for the poor, whose circumstances cannot afford it ; but still the rich, as well as the poor, should keep within the bounds of Truth and moderation.—Truth led, and still leads into plainness.

It must be allowed that many who come to our meetings, especially honest-minded young people, who are pretty orderly in their conversation, some of whom may be better than others who are plainer, are yet too fine in their apparel, and are in the practice of some out-

ward things, that godly elders see are hurtful to them, taking up too much room in their hearts, and obstructing their growth in the Truth, though they themselves are not sensible of it. These have often heard public testimonies against such things, and perhaps some particular Friends have likewise spoken to them, and yet all has not proved effectual, though they are not stiff or stubborn as many others are ; but they are so glued to the inclination of finery, that they cannot part with those things which tend to their hurt. Here, neither public preaching nor particular advice has prevailed with such ; yet those visitors have succeeded, by laying before them what the Holy Spirit led our first elders out of, and into, relating to the vain fashions, customs, and ceremonies of the world, and to testify against them : as they themselves might observe, that wheresoever any were rightly convinced of Truth, and came into the true obedience to it, the very first steps into which it led them, were to take up the cross in these things ; and if they minded the gentle leadings of this Spirit, it would lead them to do likewise. These things being recommended to their serious consideration in the light of Truth, have so far opened the understandings of some, as to make them willing to part with many things, which were a hindrance to the growth of the good seed of the kingdom.

But some may object against this conformity, if it be without conviction. I answer, there is no need of conviction in this case, it being no matter of conscience to have and wear fine and fashionable things, instead of plain ; it then results into matter of condescension to the advice and counsel of worthy elders, to which they

are absolutely enjoined by Scripture, or to what purpose do the Scriptures repeatedly advise thereto? And our worthy, esteemed Friend and brother, Robert Barclay, largely proves by Scripture, the conformity of church government or discipline to the mind of Christ, as well as the necessity of condescension and submission to elders, &c., and that the church of Christ has power to give a positive sentence, &c., relating to matters of conscience. To this treatise, namely, his "Anarchy of the Ranters," I refer my reader, believing it to be one of the most excellent works which treat of Church Government, that has been written since the apostles' days. However, let none mistake me in what I have said, as if I intended that those who are unruly or disorderly in their conversation in other respects, should be advised to outward conformity in plainness while they remain so. No; these are to be dealt with another way, and if they cannot be reclaimed, I would rather choose they should go in their flaunting, fashionable dresses, and appear as they really are, by which they would not bring a greater reproach upon Truth and Friends.

But, on the other hand, I am indeed for endeavoring to prevail upon the orderly, to condescend to the advice of solid Friends, which it is their duty to do, even by Divine authority; and their condescension may produce good effects upon themselves and others; for laying aside and parting with these things has been a means to prevent the growing of that inward root of pride, from whence it first proceeded. For the evil arises first in the heart; yet we very often see, that where outward objects prevail too much upon the mind, they promote temptations, but when these objects are removed, and

the cross taken up to them, in many cases the temptation is removed. As we have by sad experience seen the ill effects of bad example, and that many grow worse and worse in following them; so on the other hand, good examples in plainness, &c., have become an encouragement to others to follow their steps.

And then, this plainness, whether from conformity to the advice of elders, &c., or whether immediately arising from the power of Truth, in those whose minds were formerly taken up with too much finery, has proved, and may prove, some check to the obstinate, who are deaf to all sorts of advice, whether public or private; and who have in some measure strengthened themselves in opposition and arguments against Friends, by producing such and such for examples in some of the things they wear and use, who, they tell us, are nearer to Friends than they are. I say, this conformity, whether instrumentally or immediately, takes away the occasion of the pretences of these unruly people.

To conclude upon what I have said with regard to family visits, I shall leave it to the serious consideration of all spiritually-minded, impartial Friends, whether such a practice can be of any injury to Truth or Friends, or lessen the ministry or the discipline of Truth, which in a general way has been established in the churches of Christ.

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In an epistle to Friends in Dublin, in 1726, after speaking of days of prosperity and advancement in the church, Joseph Pike continues:

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And while things remained in this order, the true

watchmen for Christ, those elders who were good examples to the flock themselves, diligently watched lest the enemy should steal in upon them ; and when at any time he made an appearance, they gave the alarm to the flock, to beware of the devourer. Thus, if anything did appear contrary to Truth, of what kind soever, then, without delay, these true watchmen endeavored to put a stop thereunto ; then it was that things went well in general, in the churches of Christ. I could enlarge abundantly upon the good effects of it, but in a few words may say, that then the disorderly were dealt with in due time, according to the nature of their offences, and for their good ; and if they could not be reclaimed, they were set in their places, Truth cleared, and they made as examples to others ; and then those examples became in some measure, a terror to such as were inclined to follow their disorderly steps ; by which means, I believe many were deterred therefrom. And thus, holy discipline was kept up in its right channel ; and above all, the Lord was pleased to own those services with his heavenly power.

But alas ! alas ! this state of things continued but a few years, before the enemy of righteousness made attempts to break down the fence of discipline, which had been set up by the power of God, and even prevailed on some, who had been as leading elders and ministers, to be concerned therein ; such who once knew better things, but had departed from their first love to Truth and zeal for it. These men, with their libertine company in our bordering nation, did rise up against that man of God, George Fox, who had been made the instrument in the hand of the Lord to set up good order

and discipline. Against him in particular, they levelled their rage and malice, and also against those who had kept their first love in general ; but their chief end was, to lay waste and destroy this good order and discipline, and leave every one to do as they pleased. They would have no bounds set, with this plausible pretence, that all must be left to the light in their consciences, and that Friends must wait until they were convinced that such and such things were contrary to Truth ; though even many of the things they went into, the light of Christ in the beginning led His true followers out of, and to testify against them.

This was pleasing doctrine to libertines ; it took with them, and they made use of it, and thereupon went into a wrong liberty, such as height, pride, fashions of the world, stiff-neckedness, strife, contention ; and so unruly, that they would not submit their differences to Friends, with other things contrary to Truth, and too many to enumerate. And yet all this was under the pretence of Christian liberty, and that they were not convinced by the light in their consciences to the contrary. In short, the rebellion and confederacy against good order in the church was very great and strong, and in some places they set up separate meetings ; but the Lord brought a blast upon that spirit, and they came to nothing, as a body of people. Yet notwithstanding this, the seeds which they had sown in this time of undue liberty remained, and still remain among many in some places ; and in this time it was that some of those seeds were brought into this nation by examples from amongst them, in particular, height, and finery

in apparel and household furniture, with some other things of which I am presently to speak.

Though I was but a young man then, yet I was an eye and ear-witness of many of those things, having attended several of the meetings in England wherein this libertine spirit raised contention ; and I then clearly saw the tendency thereof, that it would, if possible, lay waste the whole heritage of God ; and I bore my testimony against it, as convenient seasons and opportunities offered. I have written after this manner, to show how good order and discipline were set up and established in a general way, and what spirit it was that opposed them then. I greatly fear the same spirit is at work now in this nation, though under a different appearance ; not by opposing all discipline as they did, but by the breaking of minutes and the weakening of the hands of the faithful, who are zealously concerned in spirit for the promotion of Truth, and the keeping up of discipline in its right line.

In opening these things, I find I shall be still led on in a historical manner ; and therefore desire your patience ; for although it tend not to the information of faithful elders in Israel, who know them already, yet it may to the younger, by commemorating the kind dealings of the Lord towards us, and stirring up the pure mind in them, and that none of us may be ungrateful to him for all the benefits and labor that he has bestowed upon us.

I have already said that some of the seeds which that libertine spirit had sown, were brought over into this nation, particularly that of height, and finery in apparel and household furniture, &c. ; and by taking ex-



ample one from another, they got to a great pitch at last, though not to the same degree as in the other nation, but we were going fast into them.

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My writing after this manner looks rather more like a history than an epistle; but I desire you will bear with me, it being to magnify the loving kindness of the Lord, in rehearsing his dealings with us, and for the information and encouragement of the younger, that they may follow the steps of those worthy ancients who have followed Christ; shunning that libertine spirit which I fear is now getting in again, and has got in, endeavoring to throw down and lay waste what our godly elders had reared up by the power of the Lord. And from this fear, I am led to query after this manner:—Are there not some amongst you, who not only saw those times of outward reformation, but also heartily joined therein, by putting away out of their houses and families, those superfluities in fineness of apparel and household furniture and other things? I am satisfied there are. Or are there any who since that time have owned that concern, and for a time stood zealous for the plainness of Truth? I am persuaded there are. And now I would query, are there any of late times of both sorts, who have lost their former zeal, and suffered or permitted some of the same or greater superfluities in apparel, to be worn by their children, and in their families; and have likewise suffered as fine, or finer house furniture and garnishing to come into their own houses or those of their children, which they might have prevented, by zealously standing against it? And moreover, have they not connived at others, who have gone

into such things? I fear there are such. By these and the like means, and by taking example one from another, the seeds of height, pride and vanity, have grown and spread more among us than ever they did before that time of reformation, to the wounding and grieving the souls of the upright in heart.

Oh! Friends! Friends! I have this to say to you, from the movings of the Spirit of the Lord in my heart,—How will you answer it in the day of account? You that by your ease and lukewarmness have let in those offensive things upon us again; for as our blessed Lord said, “Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” What then will be the portion of such as these? Therefore let all who are concerned therein, repent, and do their first works, before it be too late.

And beside height, pride and fashions, which have appeared in too many with a daring face, are there not those, who have nearly lost, or been ashamed of the plain language, both in speaking and writing?

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And lastly, I now query in a more general manner, Are there not some, who were once very zealous, and stood against all these things I have mentioned, who, if they had kept their habitations in the Lord’s holy Truth, might have been made serviceable instruments in his hand, and as bright stars in the firmament of his power, joining hand to hand, and putting shoulder to shoulder, to help the faithful in keeping out these things; by which means, I am persuaded they would in great

measure have been kept out? And have not some of these, of late years, given way to those things themselves, and are there not others who have stood easy and unconcerned in mind, while they have beheld this departure; and instead of helping the zealous and upright in heart, have rather elugged and weakened their hands, by openly or secretly abetting the cause of the wrong spirited and the disorderly, so far as they were able, and thereby have sometimes warded off the stroke of justice and judgment, in the way of discipline, and hindered the line thereof being stretched over such in due time, according to the nature of their offences? For if right time be not observed, right services may be lost. Whereas, if true discipline had been duly and rightly executed, it might have tended to the good of such offenders themselves, as well as the deterring others from following their steps; but above all, it would have kept up and established good order and discipline in its right line in the church of Christ.

The obstructing or breaking of this right line of discipline, has produced, I fear, a partial conniving amongst some, for have not the easy, lukewarm, and indifferent, who have lost their first love, daubed with untempered mortar, in endeavoring to screen and defend the covetous, and those who trouble the church? And on the other hand, have not such joined with the lukewarm daubers, when they have been justly found fault with? and then, both sorts have been easy with the high, proud, and libertines, who also in their turn, as they had opportunity, have defended the rest; and thus they have strengthened one another, contrary to that most solemn charge, which the apostle Paul gave to Timothy,

with regard to the management of church affairs, namely, "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." Such as these are men for God, and right judges for him; they cannot swerve or be partial to any party, persons, or even the nearest relations, for favor, affection, or worldly ends. But as to those who are easy, lukewarm, partial, or cold, or such as are troublers of the church of God, who once knew better things, I have this in my heart to say,—The Lord's controversy is against them, whether they pretend to be teachers of others, or elders, and he will dreadfully plead with such, above others; for they may not only have their own blood to answer for, but also the blood of others. Therefore, let such repent in time, before it be too late. If any think me too sharp in what I write, I may tell them, it is no pleasing work to me, for I do it in the cross to my own will; the day calls for plain dealing, and I must discharge my conscience.

But as for you, my dear Friends, who have retained your first love to God, and have stood zealously for the Lord and his Truth, whether you are ministers or elders, young or old, what I write touches you not; therefore I verily believe you will not be offended at it; you can discern from what spirit I write. And notwithstanding I have enumerated many hurtful things, which have prevailed upon some who have been unwatchful, yet I hope none will mistake me so far, as that thereby I mean the generality of Friends, which I am far from doing; for I believe and know that the Lord

has still a faithful people in this nation, which I hope he will preserve to the end.

Moreover, I have this in particular to say unto you, who go mourning under the burden of these things:—Be not too much discouraged, though some of your brethren, that should have helped you, have left you:—it was so of old. Remember that servant of the Lord, Moses, how often he was brought into great straits, by the opposition he met with from rebellious Israel; yet the Lord stood by him and carried him through to the end. Remember the prophets Elijah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah, with others, who sometimes thought they stood alone, yet the Lord stood by them, and likewise carried them through. Remember Paul, who said to Timothy upon one occasion, that no man stood with him, and all they of Asia had turned from him. And he oftentimes met with great opposition and discouragements, yet the Lord stood by him, and carried him through all. These may be as examples and encouragement to you: therefore slack not your hands, be not dismayed because of the oppositions and discouragements you meet with; stand your ground, and be zealous for the Lord and his testimony; and although you cannot do all you desire, yet do all you can, and the Lord will stand by you, and do for you as he did for those formerly.

\* \* \* \* \*

Explanatory of the following selections, it may be observed that in the early days of the Society it was not usual for the younger members to be in attendance at meetings for discipline, until it should be evident

they had experienced a growth in religious understanding.

In after years this practice was changed so that all members were expected to attend the meetings for discipline, that they might have the benefit of witnessing, and in measure partaking of the exercises of their elder Friends, and thus know a deepening interest in the affairs of the church. But it was never the expectation that this privilege should be construed into a permission for converting the meetings into a place for debate, or for the darkening of counsel by words without knowledge; but that all offerings upon the subjects before the meeting, should be from a sense of Divine pointings from the source of true judgment.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have already spoken of admitting young men into our meetings for discipline, yet have this to add,—not as your director, but as believing it is what Truth will lead all right-spirited Friends into, in every quarter,—Be very careful in admitting any, unless they come under the following qualifications. First, they should be sober and orderly in conversation; secondly, they should be plain and exemplary in their habit and apparel, and no tattlers; and thirdly, so far as Friends can have a sense of their spirits, they should judge whether they will be condescending to godly elders, and not be likely either in words or spirit to oppose them: for I have observed some, who have been admitted without these qualifications, have in time proved great troublers to the church, especially if they had fluent tongues; and this I have beheld in some places in my travels, to the grief of my soul.

Another thing I may also observe: we have a great many young and middle-aged persons amongst us, who are orderly in their conversation, and wish well to the prosperity of Truth; and yet are, as I may term it, either indolent or too much encumbered with the things of this world, and thereby are backward in coming up into that service for Truth, of which they might otherwise have been capable, were their spiritual senses rightly exercised; but this backwardness occasions their senses to grow dull for want of use. I believe it will become the duty of godly elders, to stir up such to mind the gift that is in them, and if need be even to rouse them up to their duties, as well for their own good, as the service they may have for the Truth.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now if any who walk orderly and are in fellowship with Friends, contract a very intimate and unnecessary familiarity with persons of dark or opposite spirits, I believe it will have the following bad effects:—it may rather strengthen them in that spirit, than help to reclaim them from their opposition; and may harden them in prejudice against those who have kept firm against wrong things; besides the effect of ill example and hurt to others, who are inclined to follow the steps of the unfaithful. But beyond all this, I have observed that even the orderly themselves have been greatly hurt, and at last some of them lost thereby; for these, having frequent opportunities of conversing together, and hearing the continual buzzing of things against the faithful, the orderly have in time lent an ear to them, whereby surmises and jealousies have been begotten, then hardness and prejudice have entered, and

lastly, a joining in confederacy with dark spirits against those who have nothing more in view than the honor of the Lord and the good of souls ; and by this very means, in the time of the separation, many who at first were honest-minded, were caught in this snare, and some in this nation also. Therefore I hope the orderly will observe our minutes, and the advice and commands of the apostles ; and should they have occasion to converse with any of the other sort, let them keep upon their watch, and behave towards them as towards such as are under admonition ; for Truth, I am sure, will lead thereto.



The following Essay was written in the year 1861, by an eminent minister of the Society of Friends, who was extensively known as the author of valuable doctrinal expositions in times when the faith of the Society was assailed. He was remarkable for the liberality of his views, coupled with a complete understanding, and faithful maintenance of all the doctrines and testimonies held by Friends. Clear in his comprehension of the interests and true mission of the Society, earnest in his affection for the younger members, and deep in the inward exercises of his spirit, his writings are well worthy the serious consideration of all to whose attention they may be brought.

### WORLDLY COMPLIANCE.

It was a noteworthy feature in the teachings of the Saviour of men, when he forewarned his disciples, that the religion which he introduced, should not be popular. For the worldly, the ambitious, the self-pleasing and the voluptuous, it had few attractions. Instead of alluring followers by promises of being flattered and caressed, or holding out to their view the friendships and honors, the riches and pleasures of this world, He plainly told them that they should be hated of all men for his sake, and that in making choice of Him and his religion, they must be prepared to endure the loss of everything else, to be despised and persecuted, and accounted as fools. "If ye were of the world," says He, "the world would love its own ; but *because* ye are

not of the world, but I have chosen you *out of the world, therefore* the world hateth you."

Here the cause of the hatred is plainly stated to be *separation from the world*; not being of its spirit, nor following its fashions and customs, which is ever the case with the sincere disciples of Him who declared, "My kingdom is not of this world." The apostles understood it so, and such force had their Master's teaching on their minds, that they wrote in very strong terms to the believers, respecting the subject.

Gentle and meek as was the disciple who leaned on Jesus' breast, yet such was his zeal against the spirit of worldly compliance, that he says: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father." Again, "We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lieth in wickedness." Another apostle says of those who are lost, that the god of this world hath blinded their eyes, lest the light of the glorious gospel of God should shine unto them. The Apostle James makes a great part of pure and undefiled religion to consist in keeping ourselves unspotted from the world; and another enjoins, "Be not conformed to this world."

The antagonism between the world and the Christian, as thus set forth by our Lord and his apostles, is so broad and entire, that the dullest comprehension cannot fail to perceive it; yet there is a studied and systematic effort, even under the guise of religion, to bridge over the chasm which divides them, to reconcile their

opposite and hostile views and practices, to smooth down or fritter away palpable differences ; and, regardless of the express declaration of our Lord himself, to inculcate the idea that it is possible to serve two masters—God and mammon.

Many listen to these flesh-pleasing suggestions ; and not liking to give up religion altogether, and yet, averse to the cross and self-denial, and desirous of shunning them, they readily drink in the plausible and accommodating theories which propose to help them to heaven without renouncing the world, and thus to make them heirs of two kingdoms as widely different as light and darkness, and Christ and Belial. Of the teachers of such errors, the apostle says, "They are of the world ; therefore, they speak of, or in favor of, the world, and the world heareth them."

The teachers and the hearers are of the same spirit, and to both the doctrine of our Lord is very distasteful, when he says, "Whosoever doth not *bear his cross*, and come after me, cannot become my disciple." "If any man will come after me, let him *deny himself*, and *take up his cross daily*, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it : but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away."

It is not a little surprising to observe what ingenuity is evinced in endeavoring to appropriate these unmodish but honest tests, and yet to indulge in the customs and fashions, the grandeur and show, the vain conversation, empty compliments and hollow friendships of the world, as though the march of refinement and the social im-

provements of our day, had rendered the sayings of Christ and his apostles obsolete, and changed their plain meaning.

In our own religious Society the tendency is obvious ; and not a few, perhaps, argue the more strenuously in favor of the modern compliances, because they are inwardly sensible their cause is a weak one, and feel that they have need of all the courage and countenance which bold assertion and sophistical reasoning can give them, to allay the uneasiness which secret compunctions of conscience often create. They would gladly be convinced by their own arguments, that the disregard of plainness of speech, behavior and apparel, and indulgence in costly and showy furniture and living, &c., are not incompatible with being good Friends ; but after they have exhausted all their resources, there is still in the deep recesses of the heart a consciousness which no argument can wholly efface, that it is not so. We would affectionately counsel such not to reason against the convictions with which they are favored, however weak and faint they may be, lest the visitations of the Spirit of Truth be gradually withdrawn, and they left to the guidance of their fallen reason, which, in religious matters, "leads to bewilder and dazzles to blind ;" and thus they realize the saying of the dear Saviour, "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness."

Friends did not take up their testimony against gaiety and grandeur, and other worldly compliances, from any affectation of singularity, or desire to mark themselves by a peculiar badge, but from a firm persuasion, wrought in the mind by the operation of the Holy Spirit, that

it was the Divine will, they should thus evince their nonconformity with the world and its ways. Many who had a birthright in the Society, and many others who have been convinced of its principles, and been brought into it, have found, as they kept under the power of the Spirit of Truth, that their only way to peace, though greatly in the cross, was by being obedient in these things; and it would be presumptuous to suppose that the Lord would call for obedience in matters which were of no importance. Those who have known this work of grace in themselves, will readily admit that nothing so effectually humbled the pride of the heart, and subdued the stout and stubborn will in them, as the humiliating process by which they were brought to submit in these little and despised things, as they are considered by many; yet painful as it was, they found it a blessed work to them, and the day of obedience one of sweet peace and consolation. It is often by weak things and foolish, in the eyes of men, that the Lord chooses to lay low the lofty, and humble the proud; and nothing which he pleases to use as a means of carrying on the work of salvation, can be esteemed, with impunity, of light obligation or importance. The Scriptures moreover show, that prophets and apostles were commissioned by the Most High, to give commands to the believers on the subject of dress, and our Saviour himself did it in respect to language also; and will any one presume to say, that subjects thus noticed by the Almighty, are of trifling moment?

But some say, that we can adopt another dress than that of Friends, and yet equally comply with the requirements of Christian simplicity. We would say to

such, If it is your wish to observe the plainness which the gospel enjoins, why do you want any change? We never hear the objection made that Friends' dress is not *plain enough*; but, on the other hand, that it is *too plain*, too unmodish and singular, rendering it a cross to be seen in it. The desire to put it off arises then, not from a desire to be simple, but obviously to be more like other people, more like the world, and thus to get rid of the plainness which marks the wearer as a Quaker, and of the yoke and cross which attach thereto.

Beside, if you adopt another dress now, even though it be according to the prevailing mode, so changeable are the fashions, that in a little while, it too would become singular and conspicuous, calling for another alteration on the same ground as the first; and surely it is far more dignified and consistent with the stability of the christian character, to make no change at all, but keep to the plain and convenient dress which true Friends have long worn.

It is not pretended that putting on and steadily wearing a plain dress, has ever proved a disadvantage to any one in the spiritual warfare. On the contrary, many have found it a preservation from evils, to which they were strongly tempted by alluring but delusive prospects of pleasure; and in withholding them from which, the inconsistency of indulgence, with the plain apparel they wore, acted no inconsiderable part; and though irksome at the time, they afterward had cause to bless and praise the hand which imposed this salutary restraint. There are those who threw off the plain dress of their early education, and found it like the opening of "the wide gate," and smoothing the descent into

"the broad way," leading them into the false and corrupt pleasures of the world; and when awakened at times to a sense of their prodigal state, they have lamented their wanderings from their Father's house, but found it hard work to return.

Can the advocates of change point us to a single instance, where a dying Quaker, young or old, ever regretted keeping to his simple, self-denying apparel, and language, and living? We believe not. But we have instances of such, even among the young, where their obedience in these respects, afforded them comfort, and they have warned others against going out into the fashions and ways of the world.

In the solemn hour of sickness and death, when the gilded fascinations of the world fade away, and all the flimsy sophistries with which men seek to lull their consciences and soothe their uneasy convictions, are dispelled, we have many cases recorded, in which the Witness for God in the soul has arisen in judgment, and brought individuals under great condemnation for departing from the plainness and simplicity of their education, and some have found no rest or peace until they altered or destroyed the fashionable attire and ornaments with which they had decked themselves, when in health; declaring that it was nothing but pride and a desire to shun the cross, and to look like the world, that induced them to depart from the plainness in which they had been brought up in earlier life.

Are we to reject and set at naught all these testimonies, and arrogantly conclude that Infinite Wisdom and goodness was wrong in thus dealing with his creatures; that we know better than He does, and that mankind



are too highly cultivated and refined now, to render attention to such trifles necessary? If our actions and arguments practically say so, will not our spiritual vision become dimmed, and may we not be in danger of balking the visited children of our heavenly Father; and bringing ourselves within the import of the saying, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

It is especially worthy of serious notice, that all the modern innovations in our Society, respecting plain dress, language, living, demeanor and other matters, are in the direction of nearer conformity to the world and its ways, and not to lead from it. Is there no significance in this fact? Whatever the motives of the proposers of them may be, when we see that they all tend in this direction, and then read the solemn declarations of our Lord and his apostles, regarding conformity to the world, should not this fact induce us to pause and take warning, lest, having thrown down what was designed to be a hedge about us against the inroads of evil, and given the rein to our inclinations in these things, we find, when it is too late, that we have prepared the way for the destroyer to enter and spoil the flock. And as regards our individual condition, we may be tossed as on an unstable sea, where we have wilfully launched out, after having dismissed the heavenly Pilot, may be driven hither and thither, we know not where, drifting nearer and nearer to the fatal shoals of a mongrel profession of religion, a little christian



and a good deal worldly, and at last be stranded and make fearful shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.

Far be it from us to place undue importance upon any outward observances or conformity. We know that religion does not consist in these, but in doing the will of God from the heart, under the sanctifying power of that living faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, "which is of the operation of God," and which nothing else can give to the soul. But we also know that it is the Divine will, that our religious Society should be separated from the spirit and customs of the vain world in the particulars of which we have been treating, and it is not for us to choose out such requirements as we please, or to say this is a small and unimportant matter, and I need not conform to it. We must take his commandments *as a whole*, or we shall practically reject his government. We may try to excuse our deficiency by charging others with tithing the mint, and rue, and anise, and cummin, and neglecting the weightier matters of the law; but if we refuse obedience in rendering the tithe in what, from its seeming littleness, is the nearest and closest test of the entireness of our love and allegiance, we may soon come to disregard justice, mercy and truth—for he that is unfaithful in the least, is unfaithful also in much, and if we wilfully reject one point of the Divine law, we may incur the guilt of the whole.

The following Extract from the Minutes of the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia, held in 1872, is here introduced as an official declaration, and a final link in the chain of evidence, that the testimony to plainness of speech, behavior and apparel, was at the beginning, has been through the history, and is at the present period *one* of the testimonies of this religious Society.

\* \* \* \* \*

In considering the state of our beloved Society at this time, much religious exercise has prevailed in the Meeting for the best welfare of its members. Friends were affectionately encouraged to increased diligence in the attendance of all our religious meetings, and not to be disheartened because they were in many cases small—and to be engaged therein in reverent silent waiting upon the Lord for a renewal of their spiritual strength. As this religious exercise of mind is maintained before Him who knoweth all our wants, both in our public assemblies and in private retirement, the assuring and comforting language will be verified, “Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you.”

Much concern has been evinced in relation to the subjects contained in the third Query.\* Our religious Society has from its rise been marked by its peculiarity

\* Are Friends careful to train up their children and those under their direction in plainness of speech, behavior and apparel, in frequently reading the Holy Scriptures, and to restrain them from reading pernicious books, and from the corrupt conversation of the world; and are they good examples in these respects themselves?

as to language, manner and garb, and we cannot doubt that the great Head of the church designed that it should be so.

The true Christian is called out of the spirit of the world, its maxims, its fashions and its follies, his faithfulness giving evidence that he has chosen a better Master, whom he is seeking to follow in that straight and narrow path of self-denial which our Lord and Saviour marks out for all who would be His disciples.

A deep religious concern was manifested for the incitement of Friends to increasing faithfulness in the maintenance of our testimony to plainness of speech, behavior and apparel, in the renewed belief that the faithful members of our Society had been from generation to generation led to adopt these testimonies and practices, under the leading and guidance of the Light of Christ, and that a caution seemed now to be peculiarly needed, to guard our members against a disposition to undervalue them, and let them fall to the ground.

We are sensible of the proneness of the human heart to rest in an outside profession of religion, and we would not give an undue prominence to those of our testimonies which render us peculiar in language, dress and manners, but we believe that they have their origin in the same scriptural and spiritual views of vital christianity from which our doctrines spring; that their consistent maintenance has had an important influence in keeping us together as a people, and in promoting the spread of our principles in the world at large. The three are closely connected with each other, and the abandonment of one, weakens our hands for the maintenance of the others. We would therefore affection-

ately impress upon our beloved fellow members, the faithful support of them all, as parts of that consistent system of faith and practice which the great Head of the Church has laid upon us, seeking to Him for grace and strength to bear them in singleness of heart for His name and Truth's sake. Parents and others, who have the care of children, having come under the yoke of Christ themselves, will find it their religious duty to keep them to plainness of dress and simplicity of manners ; accustoming them to the regular attendance of all our religious meetings, instructing them in the truths recorded in the Holy Scriptures, and watching for suitable opportunities to turn their attention to the still small voice of their Saviour, and the necessity of obeying its monitions, in order to experience a change of heart, and inculcating the duty of their endeavoring to draw near with loving hearts to their Father in heaven.

## CONCLUSION.

While it is needful when truths and testimonies which have long been well understood and accepted by Friends, are suddenly and insidiously assailed, to dwell more earnestly upon them than might otherwise be expedient, it does not thence follow that they are held to the rejection of more serious and important matters. What would be thought of a critic who should charge, that because a writer upon physical economy devoted pages to set forth the office and functions of the skin, showing its relation to the body, and the attention which it required, therefore he was not aware that the existence of the body required its daily allotment of food convenient for it, that the blood was indispensable, and respiration all important? Yet this reasoning would not be more absurd than much that is urged against consistent Friends, with reference to their concern respecting the subject of Dress. The doctrines of Christianity, and the testimonies of the gospel, to be upheld in a world of vanity and opposition, may be stated in a small compass; and yet the exposition of different points may be properly spread through volumes.

Throughout the foregoing selections, the position is carefully and clearly maintained, that an undue importance is never assigned to dress in the minds of sound and consistent Friends; neither is there anything to show that weightier matters have not the greater prominence; but as it is evident that the testimony is one which the great Head of the church has laid upon

them to support, can it be pretended that He will restrain from a conformity to the world, and at the same time lead into it? Such a supposition is in the explicit language of Joseph Pike, "preposterous," and does violence to the better feelings of all those who have in their own experience known the pointings of the finger of Truth, restraining them from a worldly compliance in this matter, or leading them out of it.

It is easy to raise a cry of conventionality, and state that simplicity does not consist in a uniform, which may be true in a certain sense, but it cannot be denied that the avoidance of change, except in long circles of years, necessarily resulted in a similarity of appearance; and besides this, if it was not true that the adoption and retention of a general mode of dress was from motives of apprehended duty, and not from the traditions of men, it could be easily shown that the testimony of the Society against a conformity to the world in its fashions and manners, must be much more evident, and calculated to incite enquiry after its cause in the minds of strangers, from a similarity in the attire of the members of the Society, than if all the members were differently dressed, though perhaps equal as to simplicity alone.

Again, instances may be cited of men who, once in good religious standing, have fallen away, bringing disgrace and great suffering upon their fellow-members, while retaining the garb of Friends; but this only tends to show the reputation which has been earned in the estimation of the world by worthy members of the Society, until the world has come to expect that those who wear the garb shall lead exemplary lives; and

thus it has been, that while renouncing the uprightness of the life of a true Friend, men who have fallen may have endeavored to retain the esteem of the world.

Friends as a body, through the greater part of their history, have maintained a reputation for integrity and consistency which, together with regard for their spiritual attainments and religious worth, has given them a position in the community beyond what their mere worldly wealth and intellectual attainments would command for them. This is attributable to the co-operation of the faithful members of former and the present generation, with the openings and the leadings of Divine grace. And is it not owing to this position of the Society in public esteem, that many, unwilling to bear the humbling dispensations set before them, whereby they might have attained to the same religious standing, have, while treating lightly the doctrines and testimonies of the gospel as held by Friends, suppressing it may be the one and rejecting the other, yet desired to be classed under their name while teaching and practising things which the Society never approved?

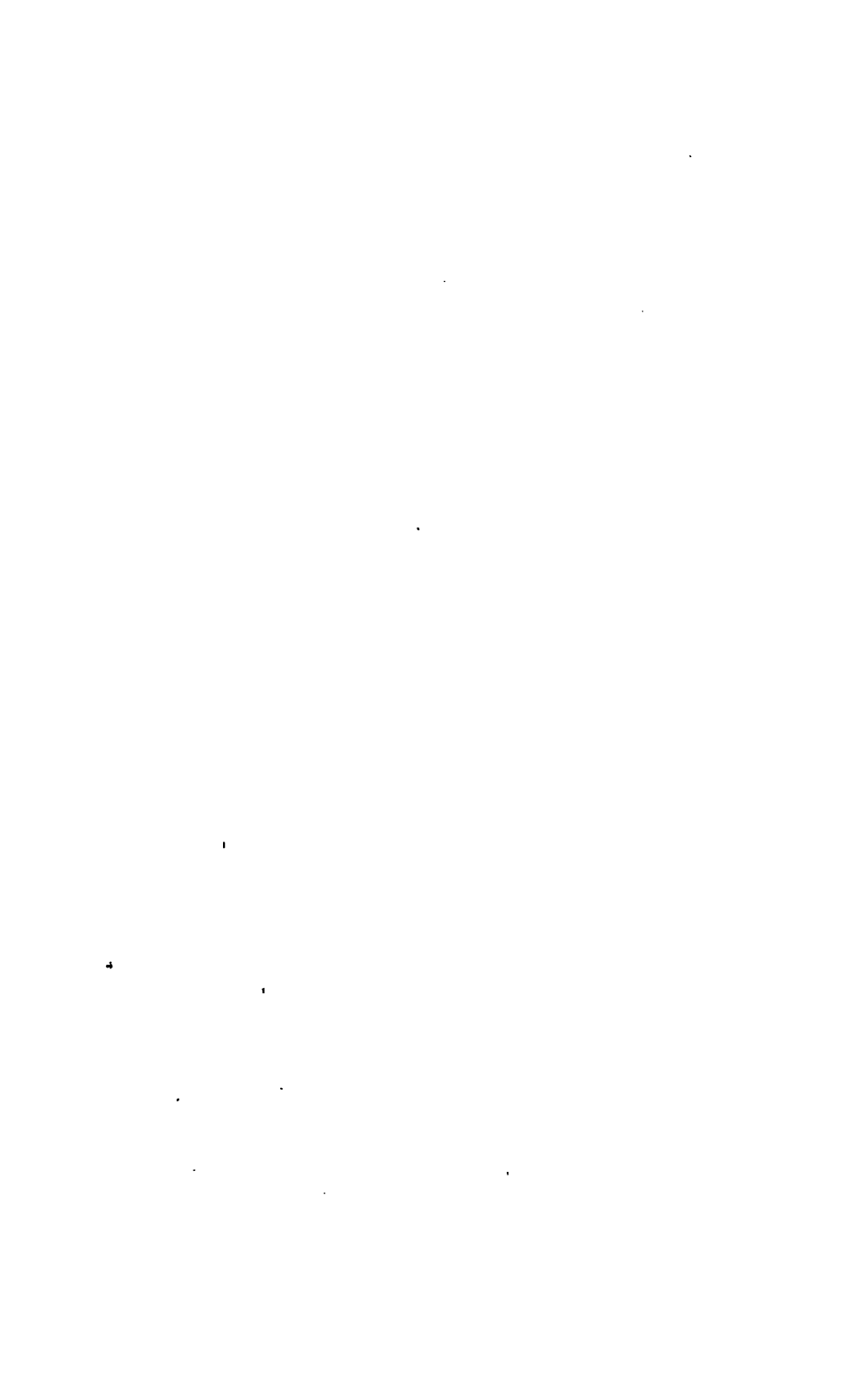
Far be it from any to recommend that those should assume the garb of a Friend who are not prepared to couple a consistent life therewith, any more than to recommend that they who hold not the doctrines of the Society shall claim that they are Friends.

Unless the members prominent in the Society are faithful in the support of all the testimonies, they must fall by little and little, for he must be lacking in comprehension who supposes that a failure of the leaders will produce no discouraging effect upon the younger members, and a willingness to put forward and support

these who are balking a testimony publicly and openly, must surely result from a weakness of faith in that testimony ; and delusive indeed is that charity which covers such weakness at the sacrifice of the visited children, the little ones as well as the faithful burden-bearers in the heat of the day.

May all the members of our religious Society, wherever situated, turn to the Light of Christ in their hearts, that so all may be taught by the same heavenly Teacher. Thus walking by the same rule, and minding the same thing, the doctrines of the Redeemer of men may again be published as the glad tidings of salvation as they were in days of old, and we once more become a united people, speaking the same language and maintaining all the testimonies of Truth before the world ; thus hastening in their generation, according to their measure, that day when the lusts of the flesh and of the eye shall no more have dominion, but " Righteousness shall cover the Earth as the waters cover the Sea."



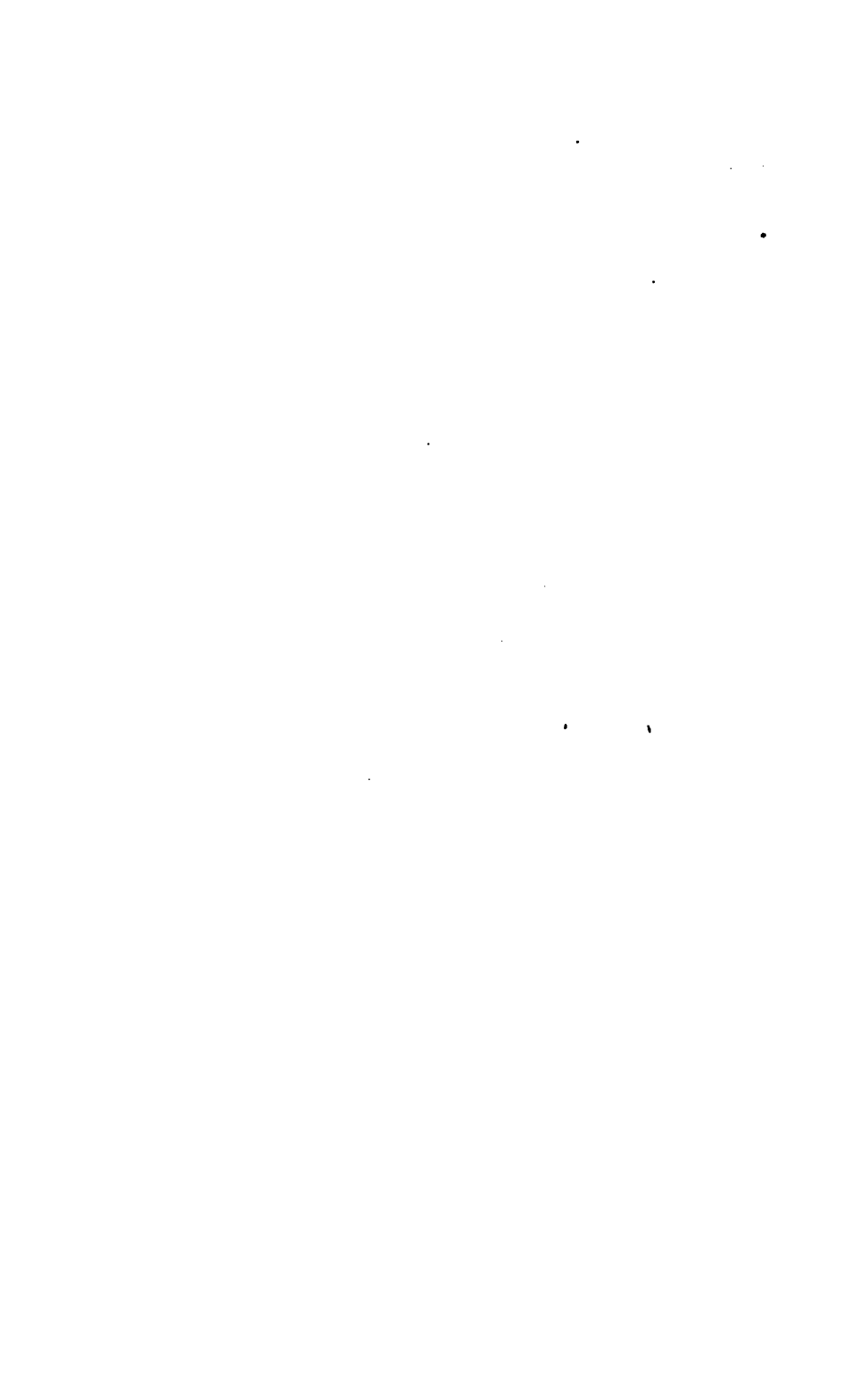


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